

THE VIRASAIIVA MOVEMENT

35

as only few have striven in the course of history. This man looked into himself pitilessly. No part of his being was dark to him. So we hear in these sayings the same voice of our common humanity which is heard in the psalms of the Hebrew King, in the Christian St. Augustine's Confessions, and in the songs of the Vaishnava devotees from Nammalwar to Purandaradasa. Basavanna loved God and he loved those whom he considered the servants of God. All his -wealth he held in trust for his God and that God's servants. He had, however, 110 illusions about the essentials of the service of God. A good life was to him the test of a good faith and a clean life the only proof of faith in God. He believed in heaven and hell, but to his mind heaven and hell were realisable in this life and were close at hand. He scouted the idea of possession of material good for its own sake; but did not preach renunciation as such. To deny the faculties seemed to him futility. To recognise in them impulses through which our nature could rise and to minister wisely to uplift through them; that with him was the main part of religion.

In any history of Indian religion, Basavanna is sure to be given a prominent place. In the history of human religions his place cannot be very different. He came into the midst of a movement for reform, "became the leader of the

movement, put faith into
thousands and thousands of his
generation and estab-
lished on a firm basis the creed that
to-day is accepted
by three million people and more.
The Virasaiva
movement was essentially a popular
movement. It
developed a school of poor priests.
It abolished the